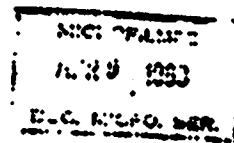


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Guderian's views on the Political role of  
ex-soldiers

1. A well placed regular source has reported that early in August Guderian discussed with an acquaintance of right wing sympathies the formation of an overall ex-soldiers organisation (Soldatenbund), and stated that once this had been accomplished, he would concentrate on the formation of a political party which, he implied, he would be prepared to lead.

2. The formation of a Soldatenbund

He said he intended to visit Generaloberst Friessner and discuss the projected Soldatenbund. The existing "Bund Versorgungsberechtigter ehemaliger Wehrmachtangehöriger" (BVW) had been created to represent professional soldiers' interests on questions of welfare and pension rights. With the passing of the "Versorgungsgesetz" (welfare laws), its raison d'être had disappeared. It should either be dissolved or change its policy completely. The chief aim of the Soldatenbund would be to make its influence felt in the remilitarisation question.

3. Views on remilitarisation

On the actual remilitarisation program, he praised the work of Spidell and Hoesinger, the military advisors. The present decisions would be adequate for the present situation. It would take two years to form and equip an army of 250,000, and only the U.S. would be able to deliver enough material for the task.

The political question, however, was the important one. Guderian's view was that American policy was mainly support, but that the politicians were lagging behind the military advisors. He said he had confidential information, for instance, that General Brentnor had told American Congressmen that political stability would be an indispensable condition of a German contribution to Western defence. In this matter the Federal Government had not put enough pressure on the Allies. Then he noted the proposed contractual agreement (which is described as a treaty), and

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said it was intolerable to stipulate that a foreign power should have the right to intervene if it thought democracy in Germany to be in danger, or that the Allies should retain a right of veto on all questions about "Westdeutschland".

He criticized the policy of Adenauer who, he said, was too much under French influence. If the present political parties could not solve the problem, some other organization would have to do it. He had already written two brochures on the subject, and in addition to writing another, he intended to meet any criticism that his attitude was only negative by taking a more important part in the necessary political activity.

#### 4. Possible formation of an ex-soldiers' Political Party

Gudrian mentioned the possibility of forming a political party. When it was pointed out to him that no personality had yet appeared who was strong enough to hold the various groups together, and that the only Right Wing party which had used the right tactics was the RDP, Gudrian remarked that there could be no question of using that party, in which Romer (whom he knew personally), was merely a tool in the hands of Doris. He then admitted in a round about way that he would be willing to accept the leadership of the kind of Right Wing party he had in mind. Baron von Stein (g) had already tried to get him to do this, and had wanted to organize a meeting in Frankfurt to which several ex-generals, and also Himmann (41) and Mann (42) were to have been invited. But Gudrian thought it better to visit personally all those to be invited.

Work on the Soldatenbund and on the proposed political party he believed should be simultaneous. While the former was being made strong enough to influence the Bonn Government, preparations should be made at the same time to create the latter, to bring its views into Parliament.

In conclusion, he repeated that he proposed to concentrate on the Soldatenbund, using his influence to get persons with views like his own in the leading positions. When this was under way, he would immediately concentrate on the formation of a political party.

#### COMMENT

The first stage in Gudrian's plans has not presumably been carried out with the formation of the League of German Soldiers on September 9th, 1951, as reported in the press.

#### FIELD COMMENT

Baron von Stein, (1)

Probably identical with ex-Generalmajor Freiherr Johann von Stein, secretary of the "Schutz-Bund deutscher Soldaten" (BDS), SS-dominated ex-servicemen's association.

- \* \* Roumann (ii) Possibly identical with Dr. Werner Roumann, former State-Secretary in Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda, who now maintains clandestine connections with Roumann (iii) below and Frank Grickner's Deutsche Bruderschaft.
- \* \* \* Roumann (iii) Presumably identical with Arthur Roumann, former Reichsgruppenführer, now a clandestine contact of the Deutsche Bruderschaft.
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